

American Community Survey Alert, Number 21

(May 14, 2004)

Informing you about news, events, data releases, congressional actions, and other developments associated with the American Community Survey (ACS).

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ACS Seeks Public Input on Future Data Products

The Census Bureau today published a Federal Register notice soliciting comments from current and potential users of ACS data products to help guide the redesign of these products. Several ACS data products have been released every year since 1997. With full-scale implementation scheduled for July 2004, the Census Bureau is proposing to make significant enhancements to the ACS data products that it will produce every year beginning in 2006. A special link on the ACS website http://www.census.gov/acs/www/product_review/index.htm will enable you to view examples of current and proposed data products. Current products are as follows:

- * BASE TABLES (previously known as Detailed Tables) – Simple descriptive tabulations of basic concepts and variables, similar to tables in Summary File 3 from Census 2000. Summary File 3 contains tables of sample items from the long form of Census 2000.
- * TABULAR PROFILES – Key summary measures, derived measures (e.g., medians), and collapsed distributions of variables selected from the Base Tables.
- * NARRATIVE PROFILES – Short prose narratives with simple graphs based on some of the summary information in the Tabular Profiles.
- * GEOGRAPHIC RANKING TABLES – Tables and related graphs that show the rank order of geographic areas on a key statistics or derived measure.

In addition to retaining the current data products above, the Census Bureau proposes to offer the following new products:

- * SUBJECT TABLES – These are similar to the Census 2000 Quick Tables, and like the Quick Tables, they are derived from the Base Tables. Quick Tables and

Subject Tables are predefined tables with frequently requested information on a single topic for a single geographic area.

- * **SUBPOPULATION PROFILES** – This new product would provide certain characteristics from the Tabular Profiles for a specific race or ethnic group (e.g., Alaska Natives) or population subgroup (e.g., people ages 60 and over).
- * **THEMATIC MAPS** – Thematic maps are similar to Geographic Ranking Tables. They have the added advantage of visually displaying on a map the geographic variation of a key summary or derived measure.
- * **ANALYTIC REPORTS** (in an early development phase) – These could be short documents, two to three pages, on a single topic or theme, or they could be longer documents covering several topics or the entire content of the survey.

A copy of this portion of the Federal Register Notice Number 3510-01-P may be found at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/product_review/acs_survey/fed_reg.htm. Written comments must be submitted on or before July 14, 2004.

For further information contact: Kenneth R. Bryson, Program Analyst, Outreach and Analysis Staff, Office of the Associate Director for Decennial Census, on (301) 763-1911, or by e-mail at kenneth.r.bryson@census.gov.

ACS-Census 2000 Comparisons Made Public

The U.S. Census Bureau this week released the fourth in a series of operational reports designed to address various operational and technical aspects of the ACS. The latest report examines the quality of the ACS by assessing how the results of the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS, a national implementation of ACS methods) compare with the results of Census 2000.

This comparison report is the first of four reports that will be released this spring comparing Census 2000 and C2SS data. The next three reports will focus on economic, social, and housing data. Here are some findings from the first report:

- * Distributions of general demographic and housing characteristics from the C2SS were very similar to those produced from Census 2000 counts at the national level. Additional analysis is needed at sub-national levels.
- * The way a question is asked and the response categories provided can affect how a respondent answers a question. Differences in presentation and wording were found in the C2SS and Census 2000 and may explain some of the minor differences that are noted in this study.

* Differences in how well the C2SS and the Census 2000 covered the population may explain minor discrepancies that were found when comparing the characteristics of sex and age for the household population.

* The experience and training of C2SS interviewers and Census 2000 enumerators appear to have had an impact on both the level of data completeness and actual survey responses.

The report finds that the C2SS estimates were highly similar to the corresponding Census 2000 results and suggests possible explanations for the differences that were found. While the results of the comparison affirm the suitability of the ACS as a replacement for the decennial long form, the results also identify areas that will require improvements.

To view the document: *Meeting 21st Century Demographic Data Needs—Implementing the American Community Survey, Report 4: Comparing General Demographic and Housing Characteristics with Census 2000*, go to <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/AdvMeth/Reports.htm>. This is a large file and may take several minutes to download and print.

Upcoming ACS Data Release

On Thursday, August 26, 2004, the Census Bureau will release 2003 ACS data in conjunction with its consolidated report on money, income, poverty and health insurance coverage. The ACS release comprises more than 100 core tables on American FactFinder; single-year and change profiles (2000-2003) on the ACS Web site; narrative profiles, ranking charts and statistical significance spreadsheets on the ACS Web site.

Click here [Note to Correspondents](#) for more information about the release.

Update on ACS Federal Agency Information Program

The ACS Federal Agency Information Program, launched last June, held its first technical workshop April 14, at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The program is designed to assist federal agencies in meeting the challenges and exploring the opportunities of using ACS data as a replacement for data from the decennial census long form.

These workshops are an important component of ACS planning. Subsequent workshops occurred this week at the U.S. Postal Service and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

For more information on the ACS Federal Agency Information Program, visit the ACS Web site at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/fed.htm>.

The ACS is a key component in the Census Bureau's re-engineered 2010 Census. Other components are early planning and the modernization of geographic operations.

CONTACT US

If you have questions or comments about the American Community Survey, please call (888) 456-7215 or e-mail <cmo.acs@census.gov>.

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